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# Family and friends cruise on "Big T"



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Photo by MCSN Carlos Cepeda



**The Falcon**  
The official newsletter for Tarawa families  
USS Tarawa (LHA 7)  
"Eagle of the Sea"

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# *The Talon*

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## Always prepared!

NC1 April Wise helps Boy Scout Ryan Vito from San Diego's Troop 500, don a Navy Fire Fighting Ensemble (FFE) as part of their requirements for earning their fire fighting merit badge aboard the amphibious assault ship, USS Tarawa (LHA 1). The Boy Scouts set out to sea as part of the ship's Family and Friends Day Cruise, Jan 27. *Photo by MC3 Kelly Morgan.*

**On The Cover:** Invited family and friends crowd the Signal Bridge for the best view as the USS Tarawa set sail, Jan. 27, during the ship's Family and Friends Day Cruise.

# Tarawa hosts over 900 for day cruise

**By MC2 Elena Velazquez**

Family and friends loitered the decks of the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1) Saturday, as the ship sailed out to sea to host a family day cruise. Local Boy Scouts of America Troop 500, Lutheran High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadets and Midway Museum Docents Society were among some of the over 900 invited guest's onboard



*Over 900 family, invited guests and friends rode out to sea onboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), during the ship's Family and Friends Day Cruise, Jan. 27. The riders were treated to a barbecue lunch catered by Outback Steakhouse. **Photo by MCSN Carlos Cepeda***

**Cruise**  
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## Cruise from Page 3

Tarawa for a six-hour cruise and barbecue at sea catered by Outback Steakhouse.

"I felt very overwhelmed, yet welcomed as I first entered the Tarawa. After I settled in, I felt very comfortable, it was a major family atmosphere," said Robert Lethlean, family member. "Most of all, I want to see where my daughter lives and works. I got to meet her friends and co-workers."

The family cruise gave Sailors the opportunity to show their families what the Navy

requires of them every day. It also gave the Sailors a chance to show their families what equipment they use, how they use it, and how they contribute to the overall mission of Tarawa.

"I wanted my family to understand the different jobs and how we affect each other," said Airman Breanne Lilja, weapons department. "It was important to me to show them the diversity of the ship and how everyone gets along."

The day was filled with tours, lunch, (provided by Outback Steak house) and a program dedicated to Martin Luther King Jr.



*ABH3 Yesy Rodriguez explains the importance of crash and salvage to HM3 Zuzana Deahosova and her guests Darren Lowe and Randy Matias on the flight deck of Tarawa (LHA 1). Rodriguez explained the contents of the static display during Tarawa's family and friends day cruise.*  
**Photo by MC3 Kelly Morgan.**

"I don't think the family day cruise could have been done any better," added Lethlean.

# Eagle of the Sea retention team grasps “Golden Anchor Award”

By MC2 Elizabeth Dumolt

The Navy is not an easy job by any means. It requires long hours at work, and many days at sea away from family and friends. Despite these challenges, Sailors onboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), obtained the Navy’s highest award for retention: the “Golden Anchor”. Tarawa’s increased retention came about through reenlistments for active duty and the reserves and

through requests for school. The award was received in spite of an extremely busy underway schedule during the 2005-2006 fiscal year and Tarawa’s deployment to the Persian Gulf, from July 2005 to Feb. 2006.

The Golden Anchor award was achieved thanks to the superb efforts of the Tarawa Retention Team, made up

**Anchor**  
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*ABH2 Erika Ryan was one of many Tarawa crewmen who reenlisted while the ship was in the Persian Gulf conducting maritime security operations. Over 80 USS Tarawa Sailors reenlisted while on deployment, to take advantage of the tax exclusion zones and reaping bigger bonuses. US Navy Photo by MC3 Kelly Morgan.*

## Anchor

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of senior leaders throughout the command and the Command Career Counseling staff of NCC Pamela Stephens, NC1 April Wise and NC1 Rhonda Kendrick. The team accomplished over eighty reenlistments during the 2005-2006 deployment and those Sailors were awarded over four hundred-thousand dollars in reenlistment bonuses.

“Along with our splendid regular reenlistment record, the “Eagle of the Sea”, led the fleet in active duty to reserve reenlistments as

well. “Our Sailors served their time on active duty and then chose to continue their service in the reserves,” said Stephens. The Tarawa Perform-To-Serve retention rate of 98% is above the Navy average of 97%. This was also a contributing factor to their receiving the award, added Stephens.

The Tarawa Navy Counselors worked diligently to send Sailors to “A” school as well as negotiating orders for Sailors to duty assignments they desired and were qualified to fill. In doing that, they brought the Tarawa to the forefront once again, leading Navy Region Southwest in

sending Sailors to schools. With a continuous push for schools and ever increasing reenlistment rate, the retention increased by 15 percent and is still climbing. “To

accomplish all this, required several sleepless nights, numerous phone calls and a lot of overtime by myself, NC1 Kendrick, NC1 Wise and the retention team,” said Stephens.

## SAILORS OF THE YEAR/QUARTER

**Senior Sailor Of the Year**

ABH1 Fredy Giron (2006)

**Junior Sailor of the Year**

FC2 Nicolas Panglose

**Blue Jacket Of the Year**

ADAN Paul Cho

**Senior Sailor Of the Quarter**

ET1 William Helm (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr CY-06)

**Junior Sailor Of the Quarter**

MM2 Joseph Cannon

**Blue Jacket Of the Quarter**

ABHAN Jose Zermenoroman

# ***AWARDS***

## **PROMOTION/JOINT SERVICE COMMENDATION MEDAL**

LTJG Lisa Taylor (promoted to LT.)

## **SWO DESIGNATION LETTERS**

ENS Maria Welch

ENS Shannon Bailey

CWO2 Danny Lee

## **NAVY AND MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL**

HMC Reynaldo Toledo

## **MILITARY OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE MEDAL**

ITC(SW/AW) Mark Mendez

## **FLAG LETTER OF COMMENDATIONS**

CS1(SW/AW) Marvin Tan

CS1(SW/AW) Ronald Yamamoto

CS1(SW/AW) Albert Padilla

CS1(SW/AW) Janelle Woodson

CS2 Edwin Jimenez

CS2(SW/AW) Teofilo Izon

CS3 Liza Bowyer

CS3 Bing Lu

CSSN Jack Shimizu

CSSN Gloria Aldrete

AR Justin Fayard

QMSN Nicole Jones

SN Edward Chopp

# Big “T” honors Martin Luther King Jr. Day

*By MC3 Kelly Morgan*

The man who lead and died for the civil rights movement was recently commemorated Jan. 27, during a ceremony held at sea, where family

**MLK**  
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**ABOVE:** SK2 David Andrews recites Martin Luther King Jr.'s “I have a dream” speech, during Tarawa’s family day cruise. The ceremony in honor of Dr. King was performed before an audience of over 900 invited guests and Tarawa crewmen.



**LEFT:** The Total Deliverance Choir from the San Diego Worship Center performs for the families and crew of Tarawa. The choir came onboard during a daylong family fun day cruise, to perform in Tarawa’s Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. **Photos by MC3 Kelly Morgan**

**MLK***from Page 8*

members and crew of the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1) heard Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s., "I have a dream" speech echoed throughout the hangar bay.

Tarawa Sailors worked long hours preparing and coordinating the ceremony which included the choir members from Total Deliverance Worship Center in San Diego, a skit, traditional dance by the Big T's Ladies of Grace, and encouraging songs and poems performed by the crew. "This was the best rendition of a Martin Luther King Jr.,

presentation that I have ever seen," said Capt Donald Shunkwiler, commanding officer.

"Normally, we would have conducted this performance before the crew only. However, it was especially meaningful to the MLK committee and the crew, to be able to perform in front of our families and invited guests, during the ship's family day cruise," said Aviation Boatswain's Handler Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Thomas Ford, coordinator and co-host for the event.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day celebrates not only Dr. King but his ideals and what he stood for.

## Boy scouts earn merit badge aboard Tarawa

*By MCSN Carlos Cepeda*

Twenty-nine local Boy Scouts from troop 500 earned their Fire Fighting Merit Badge, Saturday, while at sea aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1).

Troop 500, of Point Loma and Ocean Beach, attended Tarawa's Family and Friend's Day Cruise and with a little help from the ship's Damage Control Division, managed to complete the requirements for the badge.

"It can take weeks, sometimes even months to

earn a merit badge," said Tom Grenis, scout master. "Very seldom can you go on an outing and receive a merit badge in two hours."

Tarawa's Damage Control Assistant, Lt. Cmdr. David Bitler, created a lesson covering all the areas of the scout's requirements. Damage controlmen taught the scouts how to treat fire based injuries, the chemistry and physics of fire, frequent causes of fires and the different kinds of

**Scouts**

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## Scouts

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extinguishing agents. “The fire fighting merit badge is hard to come by; usually scouts have to visit fire stations to receive the training necessary to receive the badge. Because fire fighting is a part of ship’s life, all the necessary requirements for completing the badge was found onboard,” added Grenis. The scouts also participated in hands-on lessons such as donning fire fighting equipment and visiting damage control repair lockers.

“The lesson plan met all the objectives and discussed every point in order for the scouts to earn



*Capt. Donald Shunkwiler, commanding officer, presents Boy Scout Troop 500 with their Fire Fighting Merit Badges after having earned them while underway onboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), Jan 27. The 29 boy scouts came aboard along with over 900 family and friends of the Tarawa crew. **Photo by MC3 Kelly Morgan.***

their merit badge,” said Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class April Wise, command career counselor and the scouts escort for the day.

Wise said the most challenging part of the day was translating all the military terms used aboard ship so the scouts could

understand. “I had to step outside the military box, but they were very excited to be onboard and learn and share their knowledge as we shared ours,” said Wise.

The visiting scouts also took part in tours and other activities throughout the day, watching ship’s movement from the flight deck and enjoying the static displays presented by different departments throughout the ship. Before the day was over, the scouts were presented their merit badges by the Tarawa’s Commanding Officer, Capt. Donald Shunkwiler, during a regularly scheduled command award ceremony.

# NJROTC Cadets earn junior ESWS pins while onboard USS Tarawa

**By** MCSN Karalie Pallotta

Seven Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets (NJROTC), from Lutheran High School, Laverne, Calif., earned their junior Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) pin while embarked aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1).

During their week-long stay, the NJROTC cadets had a busy training

**Cadets**  
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*Capt. Donald Shunkwiler, commanding officer, presents Cadet Andrew Okubo, Lutheran High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadet with an honorary mini Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist certificate. The NJROTC Cadets spent eight days at sea learning about the Navy and the various departments and systems aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1). **Photo by** MCSN Karalie Pallotta.*

## Cadets

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schedule in preparation for an ESWS oral board, made up of various departmental leading Chief Petty Officers.

“We spent a week at sea to learn about the Navy and what the Navy does and how operations are carried out. Mainly, we’ve been learning as much of the basic information as we can,” said Cadet Christopher Hartwell, a 10<sup>th</sup> grader.

Each cadet was given a Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS), booklet when they arrived. They were tasked



*In order to earn their honorary mini Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist Pin Lutheran High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Cadets sat in front of a board of chiefs. The Cadets spent eight days at sea, learning about the Navy and the departments and systems aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1). **Photo by** MCSN Karalie Pallotta.*

with collecting signatures in their PQS books, once they

were knowledgeable about each department

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## Cadets from Page 12

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aboard Tarawa.

“We learned about combat systems, deck department, how important the bridge is, and all the things that Supply is in charge of,” said Cadet Amanda Jochimsen, 10<sup>th</sup> grader. “We also learned about the machines onboard,” she added.

Every department visit was set up to teach the cadets about the personnel who worked in them and how they operate, in order to prepare the cadets for their ESWS board.

“We had to learn all of the rates and what they do,” said, Cadet Jonathan Hilton, 9<sup>th</sup> grader.

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**“They were under a lot of stress, but they still enjoyed it.”**

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“Remembering who operates what, and who maintains the different things, was pretty hard,” Hilton added.

When it came time for their board, the cadets were anxious, but they were also in high spirits.

“We were nervous, but we studied and

learned as much as we could and there wasn’t much more we could do

to be prepared,” stated Hartwell.

In one week, the cadets worked hard to learn everything they possibly could about, not just Tarawa, but the Navy as a whole, in order to pass their oral board. It was an experience none of the

cadets would soon forget.

“I think the cadets are taking a lot away from this experience,” said Diana Beckett, chaperone and administrator at Lutheran High School. “They really enjoyed themselves. They were under a lot of stress, but they still enjoyed it. They’re going to have a lot of stories to share when we leave. It was just a wonderful experience for us all.”

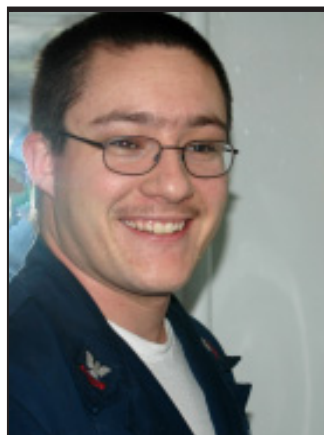


## SN DONOVAN DAVIS



Service: **U.S.Navy**  
Organization: **Deck Department**  
Duty Title: **Boatswain's Mate**  
Hobbies: **sports, old school cars**  
Favorite Duty Station: **Recruit Training Command**  
Career Highlights: **Being part of a motivated team during UNREPS.**

## HT2(SW) KEITH EVANS



Service: **U.S. Navy**  
Organization: **3M**  
Duty Title: **Assistant 3M Coordinator**  
Hobbies: **darts, golf**  
Favorite Duty Station: **USS Tarawa**  
Career Highlights: **Making Petty Officer Second Class.**

## AN KACEE LEE GRESHAM



Service: **U.S. Navy**  
Organization: **Air/ V-1**  
Duty Title: **chocks and chains**  
Hobbies: **music & football**  
Favorite Duty Station: **USS Tarawa**  
Career Highlights: **Being flown to join the crew mid-way through WestPac.**

## COOL PIC

Boy Scouts of America Troop 500, pose for a picture with Capt. Donald Shunkwiler, commanding officer, and Capt. David Bean, executive officer, after a fun day of training and exploration aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1). The "Big T" set sail with over 900 invited guests who were treated to an Outback Steakhouse barbecue lunch.

**Photo by** MC3 Kelly Morgan

